

SPECIAL AIRWORTHINESS INFORMATION BULLETIN

Aircraft Certification Service
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www.faa.gov/certification/aircraft

This is information only. Recommendations aren't mandatory.

Introduction

This Special Airworthiness Information Bulletin alerts you, owners and operators of **Eurocopter France AS355 helicopters**, of an incident regarding loss of a fuel cap during flight.

Background

The New York City Police Department reported to the FAA that an unknown object had fallen from the sky at approximately 21:50 on July 19, 2004. The object had fallen through a Plexiglas awning of a hotel, landing on the main entrance steps while guests were entering the hotel. An investigation revealed this object was a fuel cap from a Eurocopter AS355 News helicopter.

During helicopter refueling, the fuel cap is removed and usually placed in the recessed step, located below and aft of the fuel cap, or placed on the engine compartment base. If the cap is not installed, or improperly installed, it may become lodged between the collective pitch control bell crank and the compartment base, resulting in loss of pitch control, or the

cap may fall from the helicopter during flight causing potential damage or injury.

Recommendations

Due to the potential consequences of losing a fuel cap during flight, **we recommend that you check the fuel cap for proper installation during preflight checks and after refueling. The cap should be fully engaged and seated.** AS355 helicopters were originally delivered from the factory with keyed fuel caps, P/N: 712-401, however, many owners and operators have elected to replace the keyed cap with an optional non-keyed cap, P/N: ER271. Although both fuel caps are approved, the keyed cap provides additional assurance of a proper installation since it has an added mechanical locking feature.

For Further Information Contact

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